

## Message Text

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44

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01

TRSE-00 AEC-11 CIAE-00 COME-00 CAB-09 FAA-00 MC-02

L-03 RSR-01 /074 W

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P 121625Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8084

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BRUSSELS 3915

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, ETRD, BE

SUBJ: PURCHASE OF SABENA AIRCRAFT

REF: STATE 135539

1. MEETING OF INTERMINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON JULY 11 MADE NO DECISION ON CHOICE OF SABENA AIRCRAFT. QUESTION WAS DEFERRED FOR DECISION BY THE FULL CABINET ON JULY 13.

2. AMBASSADOR HAS BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN REACHING MIN DEF VANDEN BOEYNANTS (WHO MAY BE TRYING TO AVOID TALKING WITH HIM). HOWEVER, ECOMCOUNS HAS REACHED HIS CHEF DE CABINET HEBETTE (FOR THE INTERMINISTERIAL ECONOMIC COMMITTEE), ASKING HIM TO CONVEY TO THE MINISTER THE AMBASSADOR'S CONCERN THAT THE DECISION BE MADE ON ACCEPTED COMMERCIAL GROUNDS. HEBETTE PROMISED TO MAKE CERTAIN THE MINISTER UNDERSTOOD THE AMBASSADOR'S CONCERN.

3. BEFORE THE JULY 11 MEETING, THE AMBASSADOR WAS ABLE TO REACH FONOFF SECGEN GRANDRY, AND ON THE BASIS OF THIS CONVERSATION GAVE GRANDRY AN AIDE MEMOIRE POINTING TO THE COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES OF THE BOEING PRODUCT AND EXPRESSING THE HOPE THAT A DECISION WOULD BE MADE ON BASIS OF COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS. IN ADDITION, IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH FONOFF DIRGEN DAVIGNON ON JULY 11, THE AMBASSADOR STRESSED THAT WE WERE AWARE OF SABENA'S ABIDING

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INTEREST IN THE PURCHASE OF THE 737'S AND PROFESSED HIMSELF

CONFIDENT THAT THE DECISION WOULD GO IN FAVOR OF BOEING,  
SINCE SABENA HAD EXPLICITLY STATED ITS PREFERENCE FOR THE BOEING  
PRODUCT.

4. ALSO PRIOR TO THE JULY 11 INTERMINISTERIAL GATHERING, BOEING  
REPRESENTATIVES AND MINECON AFFAIRS CLAES PARTICIPATED IN A  
MEETING ARRANGED BY THE EMBASSY TO DISCUSS "ECONOMIC COMPENSATION".  
THERE WILL BE ANOTHER MEETING ON JULY 12 TO CONTINUE THESE  
DISCUSSIONS. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE AMBASSADOR HAS SPOKEN TODAY  
WITH MINISTER OF ECONOMICS CLAES. MINISTER CLAES EXPLAINED THAT  
THE GOB DID NOT WANT TO DO ANYTHING THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED  
UNFRIENDLY TO THE UNITED STATES; ALSO, HE DID NOT WANT TO FORCE  
SABENA TO BUY A PLANE THEY DID NOT WANT. THE MINISTER SAID THE  
ONLY PROBLEM WAS THE ECONOMIC COMPENSATION, SINCE THE FRENCH  
HAD MADE A VERY ATTRACTIVE OFFER. SO FAR, BOEING HAD BEEN SOME-  
WHAT NONCOMMITTAL, AND TODAY'S MEETING WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH  
THAT PROBLEM.

5. THE SITUATION IS COMPLICATED BY REPORTS, WHICH ARE APPARENTLY  
WELL-FOUNDED, OF A FRENCH "PACKAGE" OFFER OF THE ALPHA-JET  
TO REPLACE THE BELGIAN MILITARY TRAINING FIGHTER, PURCHASE OF  
THE MERCURE, AND REPLACEMENT OF THE F-104 BY THE MIRAGE F-1.  
IN RETURN FOR ACCEPTANCE OF SUCH PACKAGE, THE FRENCH REPORTEDLY  
HAVE OFFERED HIGHLY ATTRACTIVE "ECONOMIC COMPENSATION" TO THE  
BELGIANS. WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE BELGIANS ARE  
NEAR COMMITTING THEMSELVES AT THIS TIME ON THE F-104 FOLLOW-ON.  
WE SUSPECT, HOWEVER, THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THAT BELGIANS MAY  
CHOOSE THE ALPHA-JET.

6. SABENA TELLS US THAT THERE IS A NINE-OUT-OF-TEN CHANCE IN  
FAVOR OF BOEING PURCHASE. OUR COMMERCIAL AND BANKING SOURCES ARE  
OF THE SAME OPINION, ALTHOUGH ALL ADMIT THERE IS  
STRONG POLITICAL PRESSURE GENERATED BY ADVOCATES OF FRENCH QTE  
PACKAGE UNQTE.  
STRAUSZ-HUPE

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 12 JUL 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
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**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Secure:** OPEN  
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**Subject:** PURCHASE OF SABENA AIRCRAFT  
**TAGS:** ETRN, ETRD, BE  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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